

Ladies' Sanitary Association.

HOW TO REAR HEALTHY CHILDREN.

BY

BENJAMIN WARD RICHARDSON,

M.D., LL.D., F.R.S.,

Honorary Physician to the Royal Literary Fund.

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*With Words of Counsel to Mothers
and those who have care of them.*

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ASSOCIATION.

BY

BENJAMIN WARD RICHARDSON, M.D., LL.D., F.R.S.,
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"There are mites in science as well as in charity."
Rush.

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PREFATORY NOTE.



THE eminent American, Dr. Benjamin Rush, in his address on Cullen—the great Physician of last century—let fall this saying :—

“ There are mites in science as well as in charity, and the ultimate results of each are often alike important and beneficial.”

Under the guidance of this precept I have had extreme pleasure in drawing up this mite, at the instance of one of the most admirable health institutions of our time, “ The Ladies’ Sanitary Association.”

If by this effort I benefit infant life ever so little, I ought from the beginning of it to add to the well-being of life universal in the human family. I am a sower going forth to sow. There may be no harvest; but, if there be, where is its end of usefulness?

I thank the Committee of the Ladies’ Sanitary Association, for prompting me to come forward once more in the character of a teacher of simple truths in simple language; and I thank the Obstetrical Society of London for many most useful suggestions, which I have taken from their excellent series of rules, and which are embodied in these, now respectfully presented for public service.

BENJAMIN WARD RICHARDSON.

London,
July 26th, 1880.

HOW TO REAR HEALTHY CHILDREN.

With Words of Counsel to Mothers and
those who have care of them.

CARE FOR THE MOTHER.

I.

It is most important for rearing a healthy child, that the mother should soon get well and strong.

II.

The room in which the mother lies at the time of the birth of the child and until she recovers, should be well lighted, well aired, free from smell, and free from draughts. The room should be kept very quiet.

III.

The mother should be fed on good wholesome food. To give her poorer food than is usual,

because she has given birth to a child, is wrong, unless there be inflammation, fever, or other particular cause which the doctor may detect and prescribe for. To lessen the food is often to prevent the flow of milk, and so to prevent the infant from getting its own natural supply.

IV.

The food given to the mother should be light and nourishing: milk, rice-milk, whole-meal bread, entire wheat-flour porridge, eustards, light puddings, and fresh fruits, are all proper articles of food. Cocoa, milk, barley water or toast water are good as drinks. Tea and coffee, except in very moderate quantities, are not good. Wines, spirits, beer, ale, and stout, are most injurious and should not be taken.

V.

The mother should be allowed to sleep as much as she can, so that she may rest from the great shock she has gone through.

VI.

The air of the room in which she lies should be kept comfortably warm. The bed should be shielded from draughts, but air and light should be freely admitted.

VII.

All articles of furniture that are not wanted should be removed from the room, and whatever remains should be kept as clean as a new pin.

VIII.

Every thing that is taken from the bed should be removed instantly from the room, and all bed clothing and garments should be washed as quickly as possible after removal.

IX.

The linen of the bed and the bed-gown should be changed every day, or as often as possible. The fresh linen should be well aired and warmed.

X.

Anything in the room producing the faintest bad smell, should be removed immediately.

XI.

The mother herself should be kept very clean. Her hands and face should be washed three times a day with warm water, and her body should be lightly sponged with warm water once a day.

XII.

The mother should keep in bed ten days, and should not sit up longer than four hours on the first three days after she rises from bed. For the first fortnight after rising from bed, she should very gradually resume her ordinary mode of life, and be especially careful to avoid taking cold.

FOR THE BABY.

—
WASHING THE BABY.

I.

The baby, so soon as it is born, should be warmly wrapped up and kept warm. Warmth is essential to its life.

II.

It should be washed as soon as possible with warm water and very soft flannel. A little plain soap may be used for the washing: the washing should not be lingered over while the body is uncovered, and it should never be carried out in a place where there is a draught.

III.

After the body of the infant has been well washed and wrapped up in warm clothing, the eyes should be carefully cleansed of the matter which often attaches to them and which sometimes causes inflammation. A sponge ought not to be used for this purpose, but a bit of clean, new, and soft cotton wool, which should on no pretence be used more than once.

IV.

After the first washing, the infant should have a warm bath twice a day, one in the morning and one in the evening. The water should be pleasantly warm to the hand—not hot, but luke-

warm. The body should be washed, while in the bath, with a piece of soft flannel, which should be changed for a new piece every week at least. The washing should be conducted gently and rapidly, a little plain soap being used. After the washing, the body should be well dried with a warm soft cloth or towel.

V.

Round the body there should at first be carried two or three rolls of soft flannel or cloth, by which the navel string may be kept in position. But tight swathing of the body and limbs by many bands of cloth or flannel—swathing bands—is the worst thing that can be done. It checks free breathing and circulation of the blood, chafes the skin, pinches, and causes want of comfort and rest. It is most important to see that the edges of the roller or of the tapes do not cut nor chafe.

VI.

If in washing the baby any deformity of body should be seen; if a sore place should be found; if the navel string should bleed; if there should be swelling or protrusion at the navel or in the groins; if the natural functions should seem to take place without control; if the bowel should protrude; or, if anything unnatural be noticed, the fact should be at once told to the doctor. If there be no doctor in regular attendance, some doctor near should be sent for directly, so that no time be lost in attending to the defect. The practice of pressing the upper part of the head to close the opening on the top, is wrong and very dangerous.

VII.

If, in the course of dressing the infant, chafing of the skin be observed in the folds of the limbs or neck, a little powder may be used. The best powder is pure starch, ground into a fine powder, and tied up in a soft muslin bag. Scents in the powder are useless, and sometimes hurtful.

DRESSING THE BABY.

I.

From the first, the dress of the child should fit loosely and easily. Tightness of the dress anywhere is very bad.

II.

The clothing should be light and warm, and it should cover all the body, except the head, face, and hands. Light soft flannel, having a smooth surface, should be put next the skin. The feet should be clothed in warm woollen socks and shoes.

III.

The clothing should always be kept as clean as can be, so that it never has a bad smell, nor shows patches or spots of dirt. The body linen of the child should not be washed with soda.

IV.

Ordinary pins should never be used to fasten the clothing. The nursery pin is the only pin that should ever be used for the baby.

FEEDING THE BABY.

I.

So soon as the infant is first washed and dressed, it should be put to the mother's breast.

The mother and child both get good from this plan. If the mother has little milk, the act of putting the child to the breast will tend to cause a flow of milk; and, if the infant gets milk direct from its mother, it will not require opening medicine. The infant will live best, and ought to live solely on breast milk for six months; eight months will not be too long.

II.

If the mother fails to supply milk from her own breast, and if there be no wet nurse, the child should be fed with cow's milk diluted with water. Equal parts of cow's milk and water is the best mixture, to which a little sugar, one tea-spoonful to a quarter of a pint, may be added. As soon as ever it is possible, let the infant have its natural breast milk; and should that not be quite sufficient in quantity, supplement with cow's milk, diluted with an equal quantity of water and a little sugar.

III.

It is wrong to give up breast milk because the supply from that source is not enough. The milk given in addition to breast milk should be warmed before it is given as food. As the child gets older, the quantity of cow's milk may be increased and the water lessened. At two months, the cow's milk may be increased to two-thirds, water one-third. At six months, the cow's milk may be used without water.

IV.

When milk is given from the feeding bottle, the nipple from the feeding tube should be kept very clean, and should often be renewed. There should

always be two bottles, one in use, the other lying ready for use in clean cold water. Milk should never be left in the bottle. So left, it becomes cold and sour, and is sure to cause disturbance of the stomach and bowels. What remains in the bottle should be put away, and the bottle should be cleansed immediately.

IV.

Let the hours at which the breast is taken, or the milk is given, be very regular; then, in a short time, the infant will fall into the most punctual course of feeding, which is a great advantage. Up to the time when the child is three months old, it may have its milk every two hours during the day and once or twice during the night.

V.

So soon as the milk is taken, remove the baby from the breast. When the bottle is used, take the tube from the mouth, as soon as the food in it is gone. Useless sucking always gives rise to indigestion, flatulency, and disturbance of the bowels.

VI.

Of all things, take care that the infant does not suck its thumb or any solid substance. The practice of useless sucking is bad in two ways. Of a certainty, it causes pain in the stomach, wind, and disturbance of the bowels. It also gives rise to after deformity of the mouth: nearly all grown-up persons who have their upper front teeth too prominent and angular, with a deep hollow in the roof of the mouth, have caused that deformity by sucking the thumb when they were infants.

WEANING, AND USE OF OTHER THAN MILK FOOD.

I.

After six months, the infant may begin to be weaned; but there is no cause for hurry, and if the child is at the breast for nine months, it will take no harm. At nine months it should be weaned.

II.

Weaning should be carried out gradually, and the milk food should be replaced by something similar. The best substitutes are whole meal, wheaten porridge, and oatmeal porridge, with fresh milk. Until the first set of teeth are complete, no other kinds of food are required. The practice of giving infants bits of animal food, animal soups, or puddings is most injurious.

III.

Intoxicating drinks of all kinds are most poisonous to infants. Any term less strong than this, as applied to these drinks, would be under the truth. No such drinks should ever be given, either with or as food.

IV.

After the child has cut all its first teeth, it may begin to take light solid food. Good bread, small portions of well-cooked animal food, light custard puddings, and fresh fruits, are the best foods in early life.

Under a prudent system, animal flesh may be

dispensed with, as well as intoxicating drinks. Oatmeal and wheaten porridge with milk are still the best staple foods.

V.

Tea and coffee should never be given to children.

VI.

The feeding of children as of infants should be at regular intervals. They should be fed about every three hours in the course of the day.

SLEEPING AND REST IN INFANCY.

I.

The infant should from the first be taught to sleep in its own little bed or cot. In its first days it should be allowed to sleep when it likes, and indeed it may pass three parts of its life in sleep. It should be trained to go to sleep at regular hours at night. The bed should be very soft, so that the little body finds rest on every part.

II.

The infant should be put into a warm bed, and be kept warm during sleep. It should not be excluded from the air, but should sleep in a pure warm atmosphere, and be well covered with light warm bed-clothes. The air of the room should always feel comfortably warm. If a thermometer be used, it should indicate not less than 60° and not more than 65° Fahr.

III.

All artificial plans and practices of causing sleep are bad. The infant should go direct to its rest. Walking about with it, rocking it, jogging it, are bad habits. Once taught these habits, it soon fails to go to sleep without them, and they create much disturbance of sleep, with dreams and startings, which lead to feverishness and fretting the next day.

IV.

Soothing syrups, laudanum, poppies, and all sleeping drugs, are most injurious as means for producing sleep, and should only be used under competent medical advice. They ought to be excluded from the houses of all persons who call themselves respectable, except, when wanted, under medical direction.

V.

The sleep of the child should never be disturbed by noises and sudden surprises. It is most hurtful to take up the baby from its quiet repose to shew it to strangers, or to amuse it in gas, candle, or lamp light.

THE SLEEPING ROOM OR NURSERY.

I.

It is desirable that the sleeping room or nursery should not only be warm but quiet, spacious, and well-aired. Anything that causes a bad smell should not remain in the room for a moment. Above all things it should never be darkened. The cot may be shaded from direct light, or the light may be shaded from the little sleeper by a curtain; but the sun-light, when it is present,

should always be let into the room. Sun-light cheers, exposes dirt, and purifies the air.

II.

It is always unsafe for a baby to sleep in bed with its parents.

DAILY EXERCISE FOR THE BABY.

I.

The baby should be taken out into the air every day, except when the weather is wet or very cold. It does the infant no harm for it to sleep when it is out of doors if it be well wrapped up. The exercise out of doors should be long before night, and at times when the weather is most agreeable, not too hot and not too cold.

II.

In winter, the infant should go out twice a day if it be possible, once as a matter of course. In summer, it may live out of doors in the best parts of the day. It is better to take the child out in a perambulator than to carry it in the arms. The perambulator should be strong, easy, and so large, that the child can lie down in it as if in its cot.

III.

When out of doors, the infant should be well protected from the cold in winter and from the heat in summer. In winter as well as summer light-coloured clothing is best for it. In the summer, its head should specially be shielded from the direct rays of the sun, to prevent sun-stroke.

A QUIET LIFE FOR THE BABY.

I.

The infant life should be one of quiet all the day and all the night long. An infant ought

never to be exposed to sudden noises and starts. An infant should never be taken into great crowds or tumults, nor into public noisy meetings and amusements.

II.

Many of the painful impressions which are felt in after life, and which cannot be traced to any direct origin, are inflicted in the period of infancy, when the mind receives but does not remember the fact of receiving the impressions.

III.

Infants should not be shouted at nor scolded, nor in any way frightened. They suffer intensely from sudden alarms and fears, and may become nervous for life by such injuries. A baby should never be struck nor subjected to any punishment of that kind.

IV.

The baby should always be made as happy as can be. Then it is likely to grow up disposed to be blessed with a cheerful disposition, which will make it happy in itself, and a source of happiness to all around it.

V.

The infant should never be lifted up by its arms, or made to stand just on its toes while partly lifted. It should on no account be placed too early on its feet to stand or to walk. By placing it on its feet too early the child is apt to get bow-legged, and sometimes weak or deformed in the back. As a rule the child itself learns, naturally, to acquire the art of standing and walking, and it should be left to itself so to learn.

VI.

The child should be trained, as early as is possible, to acquire natural habits. The practice which some mothers and nurses follow, of pinning up children for several months in thick chafing napkins, or of seating them for hours on a chair, is most unhealthy. If the child be gently taken up for natural purposes at regular times, it will soon learn to understand the habit, and will cry to be assisted at the proper time only.

NURSING WOMEN & MOTHERS.

I.

Those who are nursing the young from their own breast, should be kept as free as is possible from anxiety and care, and should be encouraged to be all day cheerful and happy. The impressions they make on the child are often life-long.

II.

Nursing women and mothers should be well but not richly fed. They should have four light meals a day, abundance of milk, fresh fruit, and in fact, generous food. They may take tea and coffee in moderate quantity, but every stimulant of an alcoholic kind, such as ales, stouts, wines, and spirits, should be avoided. Stimulants injure the nurse, the mother, the infant. They can be easily substituted by milk, maltine, oatmeal-porridge, and other harmless and truly sustaining foods.

III.

Every mother, who is not in actual bad health, should nurse her own child. This is a duty, not to the child merely, but to the mother. It is health to both.

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Ladies' Sanitary Association,

ESTABLISHED 1857.

AFFILIATED WITH THE
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SOCIAL SCIENCE.

This Association aims at the diffusion of Sanitary Knowledge among all classes, by the publication of Tracts, the delivery of Lectures, the establishment of Institutions for Training Nursery-Maids, and of Loan Libraries of popular Sanitary Books.

One million two hundred and thirteen thousand Tracts have been published, and eighty courses of Lectures delivered. Funds are now urgently needed for the further prosecution of the Association's work, and the Committee earnestly solicit the aid of all who are interested in Sanitary Reform.

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The Secretaries will very gratefully receive suggestions on any subject connected with the objects of the Association.



